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FOR THE EVANGELIST.

THE TWO WITNESSES IN REVELATION, 11th CHAPTER.

A FEW years ago, the attention of the religious community was very much directed to the book of Revelation. Many supposed that they could determine by it what would be the result of the commotions which then existed in Europe, and show with a good degree of accuracy when the latter-day glory would commence. But Divine Providence, as might have been expected, has completely frustrated these premature calculations ; and shown the world, that the Revelation was not designed to make prophets of us.

In consequence of this disappointment, there appears now to be a prevailing disposition to adopt the opposite extreme, and treat the Revelation as though nothing could be learned from it. You will often hear men state, with some appearance of self complacency, that they know nothing about it ; as if it were meritorious to plead ignorance of this part of Inspiration. But surely there is a difference between the *use*, and the *abuse* of this book. It does not follow, because some have abused it, or misconstrued it, that we do well to treat it with neglect. As it is a part of the Scriptures, it is profitable. It gives a general view of the most important events that were to affect the Church from the Apostolic age to the day of judgment. It is a standing witness to the truth of Christianity. The successive accomplishment of it is designed to edify, strengthen, and console Christians during their militant state. The unaccomplished predictions are wisely involved in obscurity ; but no reason can be assigned why such as are fulfilled should be inexplicable. These may be understood by diligent and humble investigation. *They belong to us.* By them we may discover the signs of the times. Though the contest which agitated the Christian world at the commencement of the present century has terminated contrary to the sanguine expectations of many expositors, and in a way which seems to remove the Millennium to a greater distance than we imagined ; yet this is no reason why we should cease to inquire "What of the night?"

Since the political whirlwinds, which were mistaken for some of the

seven last plagues, have ceased, there is opportunity for discovering what part of prophecy they fulfilled. Few, if any, will contend at the present time, that the last trumpet has even begun to sound. As this trumpet is called the last woe, it evidently contains the vials, or seven last plagues ; some of which are represented by inspiration as more dreadful than any preceding calamity. Tremendous judgments, then, will fall upon the world, before the peaceful reign of Christ will be necessarily extended. But may we not hope that the Church has passed through her severest trials, and that the remaining calamities will bear principally upon her enemies ? To determine this point, which so deeply concerns the friends of Zion, we must inquire whether the witnesses have been already slain, as predicted in the eleventh chapter of the Revelation. For there this event is represented as taking place at the close of the sixth trumpet, or second woe. If the death of the witnesses is future, as is commonly supposed, it follows that the sixth trumpet has not ceased to sound, but that the most dreadful part of the second woe is yet to come ; a part, which will deeply affect the vital interest of religion, and exceedingly alarm and distress the Church. But if the witnesses have already been slain, and raised again, all the great calamities which are to be inflicted on the world before the millennium, as stated in the Revelation, come under the last woe. In that case the Church may rejoice in the assurance, that her light is come, which will shine more and more to the perfect day. For the witnesses being caught up to heaven, the seven last plagues were to fall on their enemies. It surely concerns us to inquire on which side of the Red Sea the Church is at this time. For the purpose of doing this, it is necessary to ascertain what is meant by the witnesses. On this subject many opinions have been advanced. The most common one is, that they are a succession of saints. But in showing my opinion, I shall offer some reasons why I believe that these two witnesses, which were to prophesy in sackcloth, be slain, raised, and caught up to heaven, are the Bible ; and that this prediction of the treatment it was to receive has been fulfilled ; and that the second woe is of course past.

To illustrate this, it is necessary first to take a cursory view of the order and manner in which the predictions are arranged in the Revelation. The different periods are marked by seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials. The seventh seal includes the trumpets ; and the seventh trumpet the vials. The fifth, sixth, and seventh trumpets are called first, second and third woes. The second woe began in the thirteenth century, when the Turks invaded Europe. After describing the calamities they would occasion, the prophecy referred to tribulations, which were to arise from other sources ; and for the purpose of tracing them to their origin, it was necessary to recur back several hundred years. To prevent confusion, the little Book was introduced, which the prophet was directed to eat.—The import of this, is recorded in the 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th chapters. Each of these chapters describes a particular series of events, extending through twelve hundred and sixty years. These four series, though equal in duration, and in some respects connected, were to

begin and end at different times. The one stated in the 11th chapter began first; for it was to terminate with the second woe; while that stated in the 13th chapter, relating to the Papal beast, will not terminate till the seventh plague of the third woe. But both of them were to continue twelve hundred and sixty years.*

That the time might be distinctly known, when the thousand two hundred and three score days, in which the witnesses were to prophesy in sackcloth, would terminate in their death and resurrection, it is added: "The same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth part of the city fell; and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand, and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe is past; and behold, the third woe cometh quickly."

Hence those who believe that the witnesses are yet to be slain, must, to be consistent, admit that the distressing scene figuratively described in the passage just quoted is likewise future; that there must be hereafter such a public, extensive, and successful opposition made against religion in some part of the Papal dominions, as will answer to the description which Inspiration gives of the slaying of the witnesses, and that there will be at the same time frightful commotions in the political world, attended with devastation and bloodshed, and the fall of one of the ten kingdoms of the Papal Empire; and that these violent agitations will cease, and be succeeded by an unusual prevalence of true religion, to make way for the third woe, or seven last plagues. But on this supposition, a long space of time must elapse before the seventh trumpet can sound, or the vials begin to be poured upon the kingdom of Antichrist. This time, added to that of the vials, would, according to every reasonable calculation, extend the existence of that kingdom beyond the limits expressly assigned to it by Inspiration. Hence the conclusion, that the witnesses have already been slain and raised again, seems unavoidable.

We are led to the same conclusion, by a retrospective view of the extraordinary events which have distinguished the age in which we live. Can any thing more extensive and dreadful be meant by the great earthquake, which was to close the second woe, than that horrid explosion in the Papal dominions, which spread dismay and death far and wide, and ultimately shook the whole Christian world? "The remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of Heaven." Has not this likewise been realized in the effects produced on the Christian community by the fatal disasters that attended the revolution in France? New and correct views respecting the injustice of war and slavery; Bible societies, Sabbath schools, domestic and foreign missionary societies; and many other benevolent institutions, evidently originated from the alarm produced by that great earthquake. Christians were affrighted to see a powerful nation bursting its bands, rejecting all authority, human and divine, burning the Bible, trampling on religious institutions, rapidly extending its conquests through scenes of blood, and threatening to subjugate the world. Their heart trembled for the ark. They saw that something must be

* A day in prophecy means a year, and a month thirty years.

done to stem the torrent of vice and woe. Forgetting their local contests, they rallied around the Redeemer's standard. Thus a new impulse has been given to the Church, and a new era in her history has commenced. Revivals, great and extensive have raised her from the dust, and rendered her *terrible as an army with banners*. Surely, such momentous events could not have escaped the notice of prophecy. But it gives no description of them, except in the 11th chapter of the Revelation, at the close of the second woe, where they are connected with the death and resurrection of the witnesses.

It is presumed that all who believe that this chapter has reference to the French revolution, will readily admit that these two witnesses are the Bible, and that they have been slain, raised, and caught up to Heaven, in the sense of the prediction. Christians were not at that time, nor at any previous time, placed in a predicament which can be made to accord with the description there given of the death and resurrection of the witnesses; nor is there any probability that they ever will be called to pass through such a scene.

It is difficult to assign a reason why learned men should ever imagine that this chapter describes the conduct and circumstances of saints under the name of witnesses. The name, it is true, is given them in some parts of the Bible, but it is given them in a literal sense. They are literally and personally, witnesses for God. This very circumstance would render it probable that something else was meant by the word when used in prophecy, which, in all other respects, is highly figurative. Besides, it seems totally unnecessary, that this chapter should describe the condition of the faithful under the reign of Antichrist; for this is amply done in other parts of the Revelation. The twelfth chapter represents the depressed, scattered, and bewildered state of the true church, under the emblem of a woman existing in the wilderness. The thirteenth chapter describes the bloody persecutions raised against them by the Papal beast. The fourteenth chapter exhibits a connected view of their faithful adherence to the truth, and their persevering opposition to Papal idolatry. It specifies three periods, in which they were explicitly and decidedly to bear public testimony against the abominations of Mystical Babylon. These noted protestations are represented by three angels flying through the midst of Heaven. The last manifestly designates the successful efforts which have been made to counteract the influence of popery from the reformation under Martin Luther, down to the present day. Now if the witnesses are a succession of saints, there would be an unaccountable repetition respecting them, and no allusion to the treatment, which the Bible was to receive. For unless the eleventh chapter of Revelation describes the interdiction of the Bible, the contempt in which it was held for nearly thirteen centuries by the great mass of nominal Christians, the temporary rejection of it in France by twenty-five millions of men, and its subsequent rapid circulation through the world by means of Bible societies recently established, these events are not even noticed in the Apocalypse. But why should they be unnoticed? Were they not sufficiently important and interesting to receive a place in this comprehensive prophecy? Would not the Apostle, and those for whom his writings

were immediately designed, be solicitous to know what reception the Bible would meet, during the dark scenes through which the Church was destined to pass ? When informed that all the idolatry of heathen Rome would be revived and perpetuated for a long succession of generations, under the name of Christianity, and by every government professing that religion, would they not be inclined to the melancholy conclusion that the writings of Moses and the prophets, together with the New Testament, which unitedly bore such explicit testimony against idolatry, must be obliterated, to make way for these abominations ? Their reasonable inquiries relative to this point were anticipated, and satisfactorily answered, if the two Witnesses are the Holy Scriptures. In that case, assurance was given, that notwithstanding the great apostacy, the Bible would continue, and unremittingly proclaim divine truth in opposition to prevailing wickedness ; but that it would not be generally regarded ; it would prophecy twelve hundred and sixty years in sackcloth ; or be despised by the rich and powerful, as persons are in humble circumstances, who can dress only in sackcloth ; who ignobly wear coarse, cheap, mean clothing, on account of poverty or affliction. "None might enter the king's gate clothed in sackcloth." But though contemned, it would not be extensively opposed. No direct and open attempt would be made to destroy it, till near the close of the second woe.

Then it would be violently and publicly assaulted and suppressed in the street of the great city ; in a conspicuous part of the empire, which included, when the prophecy was given, the place where our Lord was crucified ; an empire which resembled Sodom and Egypt in licentiousness and cruelty. Assurance was further given, that this local and temporary suppression of the Bible would occasion it to rise above the reach of its enemies ; as the crucifixion of Christ made way for his exaltation ; that it would be, as it were, caught up to Heaven in view of its enraged enemies ; or being supported by the united efforts of a great multitude in various parts of the world, and patronized by kings and others high in office, it would swiftly fly over the whole earth, as if borne on the winds of heaven. Such appears to be the import of the prediction concerning the witnesses ; and if the Bible is intended by them, recent operations of Bible societies complete the developement of the prediction,—" This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

This exposition is corroborated by the manner in which the prediction is introduced. The Bible is first brought to view, as a *measuring rod*, by which spiritual worshippers were to be distinguished and separated from the idolatrous church of Rome. Immediately it is added, " And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three score days clothed in sackcloth." The connexion leads us to conclude, that under a change of figure, the witnesses mean the same as the measuring rod. The Bible is called a witness, or by names analogous to it, by other inspired writers.—" This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached to all the world for a witness unto all nations." All the sacred writers were witnesses for God. Though dead, they yet speak. Their

writings have continued their testimony, and borne witness from generation to generation against the idolatry of the Papal church. Of this testimony Protestants availed themselves, and they always stood behind the Bible in their opposition to the man of sin. "The Bible is the religion of Protestants." Hence the Sacred Scriptures have a much higher claim to be called God's witnesses, than a succession of saints, or any thing else, to which the prediction in question has ever been supposed to apply. Nor need we be surprised to find, that in the mystical language of prophecy, they are personified and represented as prophesying, shutting heaven, casting fire from their moth, and smiting the earth with plagues. This may be justly predicated of the Bible, with reference to the judgments it denounces against its enemies; but certainly cannot be predicated of any human being. They are called two Witnesses, to denote that their testimony is ample and decisive, with some reference, perhaps, to the two Testaments. "That at the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." To complete the description of them, the spirit of prophecy calls them the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks; names which have sometimes been applied to the church, to denote that it is a medium through which Spiritual light and sanctifying grace are communicated. But the terms are much more applicable to the Bible. "The entrance of thy word giveth light." "Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth."

The increased light, which the Bible affords by the addition of the New Testament, is, perhaps, the reason why two candlesticks are mentioned here; and but one in Zachariah to which the passage evidently refers. "When they shall have finished their prophecy, (in this humble circumscribed manner) the beast, that ascendeth from the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall kill them; and their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom, and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people, and kindreds and tongues and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and a half; and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put into graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth."

The beast from the bottomless pit, as appears from the thirteenth chapter, is the Roman empire revived and linked together by the Papal hierarchy. To this hierarchy, France had always been attached, and at the time she assaulted the Oracles of Heaven, she grasped and wielded nearly all the civil power of the Papal world. She was then emphatically the beast, by which the witnesses were to be slain. What could she do more to accomplish the impious deed, than she actually did do? For a season, every religious teacher was excluded from her original dominions; the Sabbath was abolished; the Bible was destroyed. An open, systematic attempt was made by the national government to sweep every vestige of Christianity from the land! Throughout all that region, not a voice was heard in favour of the sacred Scriptures! None appeared to mourn over their prostrated glory! They did not receive the attention usually paid

to a slaughtered enemy! The burst of malicious joy which that infernal transaction produced through all the ranks of infidelity, is distinctly recollected.

Hence we see an exact fulfilment of the prediction respecting the death of the witnesses, in the treatment which the Bible received about thirty years ago in France. It might have been expected that the event would occur about that time. For it appears from Ecclesiastical history, that as early, at least, as twelve hundred sixty years before, the great body of nominal Christians began to slight the Bible, and to consider other authorities as paramount to it ; and that this circumstance gradually paved the way for the Papal hierarchy ; which was to continue for a number of years after the witnesses had ceased to prophesy in sackcloth.

The short time during which the Bible was suppressed, answers to the three and a half prophetic days. Were we perfectly acquainted with every circumstance relating to that impious transaction, we could not determine the precise point, in the progress of events, at which the date ought to be fixed. This kind of uncertainty is common to all prophetic dates. Perhaps, however, a lively imagination might discover, that just three years and a half intervened between the extinction of the last gleam of light from the Bible in France, and the commencement of those operations which have raised it to Heaven in view of its appalled enemies. But in explaining prophecy there is no necessity for such minuteness. Those who admit that the sacred Scriptures are the Witnesses, will readily perceive that the prominent parts of the prediction have received a wonderful accomplishment in the great and public transactions, which are known to all who are acquainted with the history of the present age.

While the prediction, viewed in this light, is peculiarly calculated to encourage and animate the friends of revealed truth, it accounts for one of the most mysterious concatenation of events that has transpired since the Apostolic age. The world have been astonished to see a great kingdom hurled from its foundation, sinking into the gulph of atheism, crushing myriads of human beings by its fall, and suddenly emerging from the vortex and resuming its original attitude. But according to the view which has been taken of the eleventh chapter of the Revelation, we see that these things were expressly designed in Providence to complete the second woe ; to slay the witnesses, that they might rise ; that the word of the Lord, which had been impeded for ages, might have free course and be glorified.

Thus the word and providence of God teach us that a great change is soon to take place in the moral state of the world. Passing events loudly call on us to regard the work of the Lord, and consider the operation of His hands. New scenes are opening to our view. The river of life is rolling its healing waters from the sanctuary, increasing its width and depth as it progresses.—Heathen nations begin to hear in their own tongues the wonderful works of God.—The Church is marching from the wilderness ; and the kingdom of Antichrist is tottering to its base. The present calm seems designed to afford the faithful an opportunity to pitch their tabernacle far from the camp of wickedness, and separate themselves from the devoted multitude.

Since the wind, the earthquake and the fire have passed by, the still small voice from Heaven is heard with peculiar distinctness : " Come out of her my people that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

" It is not for us to know the times and seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." But if the view which has been taken of the Witnesses, be correct, we are now passing the interim between the second and third woe, and shall soon hear the loud blast of the seventh trumpet, which will convulse the world. " The third woe cometh quickly."—The vials it contains will follow one another in rapid succession. The fifth, will extinguish the light of the Papal world. The sixth will exhaust the Ottoman empire, and open the way for the return of the Jews. The seventh will exterminate the kingdom of Satan from the earth, and introduce the Millennium. He that testifieth these things saith, " Surely I come quickly." Every pious heart responds : " Amen.—Even so, Come, Lord Jesus."

L.

THE GROANING CREATION DELIVERED.

A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

ROMANS viii. 19—22.

" The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God : For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together, until now "

MY DEAR FRIEND,

As you have requested my opinion respecting the difficult passage above quoted, I have thought that I could give it with less trouble to myself, and perhaps with equal profit to you, by sending you the substance of a sermon, which I had recently occasion to deliver from the same. In the introduction of the Discourse, it was observed, that the obscurity of the passage, as it stands in our common English Bibles, has been increased by a slight mis-translation. The same Greek word, which in the 19th, 20th, and 21st verses, is rendered *creature*, is in the 22d rendered *creation*. It aught obviously to have been rendered *creation*, in each of them. The translation, thus altered, would read as follows :—" The earnest expectation of the *creation* waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the *creation* was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the *creation* itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glo-

rious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now." By the creation, I understand the *world in general*, including brutes, vegetables, and all inanimate things. These, it is said, have been "made subject to vanity"—are under "the bondage of corruption"—are "groaning and travailing in pain together," because of the greatness of their burthen—and are waiting, hoping, and earnestly expecting deliverance. And it is affirmed that they shall be delivered. "The creature shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

The burthen here represented as lying on the creation, has been imposed in consequence of the *wickedness of man*. This is strongly implied in the passage before us, and is expressly asserted in a parallel passage of the prophet Isaiah. "The earth mourneth and fadeth away; the world languisheth; for "the earth is defiled under the inhabitants thereof. Because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, and broken the everlasting covenant, therefore hath the curse devoured the earth."

The sense of the passage under consideration may, I think, be expressed in the two following propositions:

First—The world in general has been brought into an unnatural and dreadful state, in consequence of the wickedness of man.

Second—From this state, it shall ultimately be delivered.

In discussing the first of these propositions, I shall endeavour to shew in what *consists* the dreadfulness of that state, into which the world has been brought in consequence of sin. And,

1. It consists in the *execution of the curse*, which was pronounced on the earth, at the time of the original apostacy. This curse was addressed to Adam, in the following words: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it, all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return into the ground; for out of it wast thou taken." Previous to this melancholy period, the situation, not only of our first parents, but of the *earth*, was materially different. It had been prepared as the residence of holy beings, been fertilized by the blessing of its Creator, and pronounced very good. It had spontaneously yielded every thing which was necessary for the sustenance and happiness of man, and its noxious productions were wholly unknown. But from this hour, a new and afflictive scene of things began to open upon our miserable progenitors. They must be not only banished from their beautiful and beloved Eden, but driven into a world, which had been blighted and blasted with the curse of heaven. Previous to this period, the spontaneous productions of the earth were of the useful kind—such as would be necessary for the comfort and support of its destined inhabitants; but subsequently this has not been the case. Subsequently, the thorn and the thistle, together with every noxious weed and herb, have flourished, not only without labour, but almost in spite of labour; while to rear from the earth its useful products, and bring them to perfection, has required much cultivation, and continual care. Owing to these things, the

life of man, for the most part, has been a scene of toil : and he has been obliged to eat his bread, in the sweat of his face, and the sorrows of his heart. His labours and sorrows ought solemnly to remind him of the cause which procured them. This was *sin*. On account of the wickedness of man, this has become a cursed world. *A curse of heaven rests upon it, under the weight of which "the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together, until now."*

2. The dreadful state, into which the world has been brought by means of *sin*, consists, partially, in those natural *concussions* and *calamities*, to which it has been, and is, subjected. It was because of the wickedness of man, that this world was, in the early ages, destroyed by a flood. "The fountains of the great deep were broken up—the windows of heaven were opened"—the whole order of nature was disturbed ; and millions, and millions, not only of guilty rebels, but of unoffending animals, perished. It was because of the wickedness of men, that within a few centuries after this, "brimstone and fire" were poured "from the Lord out of heaven," upon a whole region of country, destroying every thing animate and inanimate, and rendering the most fertile portion of the world a desolation and a burning, as it is this day. And it is in consequence of human wickedness, that the violence of the elements, and dreadful concussions of nature, and the greatest natural disorders and calamities, have been experienced, to the present time. Fires have burned in the bowels of the earth ; volcanoes have "belched forth their blazing seas ;" lightnings have descended in resistless desolation ; tornadoes have swept, and earthquakes rocked and rent the world. There is no reason to suppose, that calamities such as these would ever have been sent, if man had continued innocent. They proclaim to us, therefore, in accents of awful terror and power, the dreadfulness of that state, into which the world has been brought, in consequence of *sin*. Well may it be represented as groaning and being pained for deliverance. I may add,

3. That in consequence of the apostacy, the natural world has been made *accessary* to the wickedness of its inhabitants. It is spoken of in the text as "made *subject to vanity*," and under "the *bondage of corruption*." It is in bondage to corrupt and wicked men, and made subject to their vanities and sins. Through its subjection to vanity in this sense, it is made *necessary* to their wickedness. It becomes an instrument of accomplishing their sinful purposes, and gratifying their unholy desires. The brutes, the elements, and indeed all inanimate things, are perverted from their natural use, and pressed into the service of man's rebellion. The sun shines, for instance, to give him light, with which to practise wickedness with greater advantage. The winds blow to waft him treasures, with which to gratify his sordid and sensual inclinations. The rains descend, and bring forth the fruits of the earth, to be sacrificed to his intemperance, luxury, and pride. The bowels of the globe are ransacked for metals, from which arms are forged for public or private murder or revenge, and from which moneys are coined to satisfy his avarice, or to furnish him with the means of wrong. The brutes are made the slaves of his fancies, and vices, and not unfrequently be-

come the victims of his cruelty. Every part of the world, indeed, which comes within reach of the polluted hands of man, is perverted from its proper use, and pressed into the service of Satan and of sin. Such is the "subjection to vanity," and "the bondage of corruption," under which the world groans, and is pained for deliverance.

The Creator formed this world for himself. He made it a fit habitation for rational beings, who were capable of persevering in holiness and bliss. And the world itself is not culpable, that this state of things did not continue. It "was made subject to vanity, *not willingly*." So far as it is independent of rebellious man, it continues still to obey regularly "the ordinances of heaven." It is the wickedness of man, which has ruined the world. It is the wickedness of man, which has involved it in its present dreadful condition, and imposed on it a curse, a bondage, a burthen, under which it is represented as groaning for deliverance.—And it *shall be delivered*. The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, and he will do it. "*The creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption*, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." This brings me to the *second* proposition advanced; in discussing which, I shall endeavour to shew, *when* this deliverance may be expected to be accomplished.

The burthened creation is represented in the passage we are considering as "waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. And when its deliverance is effected, it is to be brought into the glorious liberty of the *children of God*." These expressions plainly indicate, that the deliverance of the *natural* world, and the renovation of the *moral* world, will be simultaneous events. Indeed, the natural world cannot be delivered, so long as the moral world continues under the dominion of sin. So long as the inhabitants of the earth continue to be "earthly, sensual, devilish;" the world they inhabit must remain "subject to vanity," and under "the bondage of corruption," and be blighted and desolated with the curse of heaven. I am hence led to observe,

1. That the deliverance of the natural world will be partially effected, during the *Millenium*. The Millenium, no doubt, will be a period of very general religious knowledge, and eminent piety. All will know the Lord, from the least unto the greatest. All, having renounced the hard service of the destroyer, will be prepared to unite, in the service and worship of the living God. But in proportion as the inhabitants of the world cease to be vain, the world itself will no longer be "subject to vanity." In proportion as the inhabitants of the earth cease to be corrupt, the earth will be "delivered from the bondage of corruption." When all men become holy, from the least to the greatest, and can cordially unite in the service of their Creator; the world will no longer be perverted from its proper use, and pressed into the service of Satan and of sin. The sun will no longer aid, by its pure light, the perpetrators of wickedness. All nature, animate and inanimate, will no longer pour its profusion into the lap of ungrateful man, to be prostituted to the purposes of iniquity and vice. Mercies will be acknowledged and improved; duties will be known and practised; and the world itself, instead of

being made the instrument of sin, will be enjoyed and used, for the glory of its Creator. In the sense here spoken of, if no other, the world, during the Millenium, will "be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Nor do I think it improbable, that it may be partially delivered in some other senses. The rage and concussion of the elements may then be less violent; and those natural disorders and calamities, which so often desolated a wicked world, may be comparatively unknown. The curse which fell upon the ground in the day of man's apostacy, may be, in a measure, mitigated, and the earth may be restored, in some degree, to its primeval state. But this will not be its full and final deliverance. It is necessary, therefore, to observe,

2. That this deliverance will be completely and eternally accomplished, at the consummation of all things, in "a new heaven, and a new earth." We are taught in the Scriptures, that the world is not, at the end of time, to be utterly and finally *destroyed*. It is rather to be *renovated and changed*. Thus the Psalmist, speaking of the heavens and the earth, says, "All of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou *change* them, and they shall be *changed*." This changed, purified system of nature is called, in many places, "a new heavens, and a new earth." Thus the apostle Peter, after predicting the last day, and the end of the world, adds, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for a new heavens, and a new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness." It was revealed also to John, that there should be "a new heaven, and a new earth, after the first heaven and the first earth had passed away." Of this new heavens, and new earth, we have not the means at present of knowing much. It cannot be doubted, however, that they will be thoroughly purified from evil, be freed from all curse, and will be rendered the meet and everlasting habitation of holy and happy spirits. Then will be "the time of the restitution of all things." Then the sons of God will be manifested, and "the glorious liberty of the children of God" will be fully realized. Then the creation will no longer "groan, and travail in pain together," on account of its "subjection to vanity," and its being under "the bondage of corruption," and a burthen of sin. Its waiting, hoping, and earnest expectation will be ended, and its deliverance will be final and complete. Purified in the fires of the last great day, it will be rebuilt in heavenly beauty and glory, and will remain an habitation of holiness and felicity for ever and ever.

It will be seen, from the exposition which has been given of the text, that it affords no countenance to the doctrine of *Universal Salvation*. This passage, it is well known, has often been quoted in proof of that doctrine. Indeed, it is relied on, by the abettors of Universalism, as one of their principal supports. But we have seen that it has no relation to the subject. It relates to the natural world, and not directly to the moral world. It describes the dreadful state into which the natural creation has been brought, by the wickedness of man; and promises, that when the sons of God are manifested, "the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into

the glorious liberty of the children of God." And all this may be done, and yet multitudes of the human family may not be finally numbered and manifested with the sons of God. This renovation of the natural world may be accomplished, and yet incorrigible transgressors be punished, as they deserve, for ever and ever.

The subject is also fitted to impress, upon those who attend to it, a sense of the *evil and dreadful nature of sin*. What has sin done? What has it done to the *human family*—the world of *mankind*? The world, in this sense, has been fitly denominated "a vale of tears," and a world of sorrow. Wave after wave has rolled over it, till it is filled and covered with a sad variety of woe. Some are groaning in slavery; some pining in dungeons; some wasting with disease; some weeping the loss of friends; and many are suffering, in a greater or less degree, from hunger, and thirst, and cold, and want, and nakedness. But the effects of sin on the earth are not confined to its rational inhabitants, who have been guilty of practising it. They have fallen heavily on the world itself. On the whole face of nature are inscribed in capitals, the dreadful consequences of the fall and wickedness of man. The very creation lies groaning under the bondage of human corruption, and travailing in pain through a burthen of sin, and blighted and desolated with the curse of heaven. It is represented as waiting, with earnest expectancy, for its promised deliverance, and "for the manifestation of the sons of God." And this world, after all, is not the place, where sin receives its *full desert*. The perpetrators of it have no more than their *chastisement here*—the insupportable weight of that *vengeance* they have merited, is reserved to be inflicted hereafter. How great then the evil of sin! How bitter its effects, in the *present life*! How terrible, unspeakably so, in the *life to come*!

This subject should be a *humbling* one to guilty men. Is it true that the whole creation groans under the burthen of our wickedness? that it travails in pain under the curse and bondage of our sin? that it is waiting, and earnestly expecting deliverance, from the dreadful servitude of our folly? How then ought we to groan under the burthen of our own sins? How ought we to be pained and distressed, under the curse and bondage of our own iniquity? How ought we to hope, and wait, and pray for deliverance, from our own fearful subjection to vanity and evil? When the very stones, as it were, speak, shall we be silent? When the creation is frightened for us, shall we be secure? When the world is sinking under the pressure of our guilt, shall we be insensible of the burthen ourselves? Certainly this ought not to be. Indeed it cannot be, without our justly incurring the charge of unaccountable and unconquerable stupidity. Let us all at once awake. Let us unite our groans with those of the creation, that we too may "be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

From the above discourse, my dear Sir, I think you may gather the exposition you have desired. If it shall be of any service to you, in aiding your theological pursuits, or quickening you in the practice of duty, the trouble of transcribing it will be abundantly compensated.

I remain yours, as ever,

P.

FOR THE EVANGELIST.

ON THE FRUITS BY WHICH THE TRUE MINISTERS OF CHRIST MAY BE DISTINGUISHED.

THE true ministers of Christ are those, who, being sent by him to preach his Gospel to their fellow-men, are really devoted to his service and the interests of his kingdom, and perform the work assigned them with fidelity. Such were Peter and John, and Stephen, and Paul. Such, we must believe, were Baxter, and Doddridge, and Brainerd, and Edwards, and Scott. On the other hand, many have been professedly ministers of Christ, who, instead of being devoted to him and performing faithfully the work of his ministers, have been devoted to their own honour, emolument, and gratification, and been in reality ministers of Satan. Such a one was Judas. Such were the false teachers spoken of in the epistles of Paul, Peter, John, and Jude. Such were expressly and repeatedly referred to by Christ himself. They were called by him *false prophets*. It is well known, that the prophets not only foretold future events, but were employed in giving religious instruction to mankind. A *prophet*, as the term is often used in the New Testament, signifies “a teacher, sent from God.” By *false prophets*, Christ undoubtedly meant, not merely such as would make a false pretence of working miracles, and of predicting things future, but those who would pretend to be his ministers, and to teach their fellow-men in his name, but who would not be true and faithful men. To these he referred, when he said, “Beware of *false prophets*, which come to you in sheep’s clothing ; but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles ? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit ; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit ; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”

It is a plain inference from this passage, that both the true ministers of Christ, and false teachers, are to be known by their fruits. It may, indeed, in many cases, be difficult to distinguish them. Much time, careful inspection and particular acquaintance may be requisite. The ravening wolf may come in sheep’s clothing. His real character may not at once appear. The false teacher may wear the garb of a minister of Christ. But as the tree must produce such fruit as corresponds with its nature, and its nature may be learnt from an examination of its fruit ; so those who profess to be ministers of Christ, may be known as true or false, by their fruits.

The present inquiry respects *the fruits, by which Christ’s true ministers may be distinguished*.

Men discover their characters to others by what they say, and by what they do. The fruit they bear, which comes under the cognizance of their fellow-men consists in words and actions. It is only by the words and actions of others, that we can know anything re-

specting their views and feelings. And consequently the real characters of those who profess to be ministers of Christ can be known only by their preaching, and their habitual conversation and conduct. These constitute their fruits.

The true ministers of Christ are distinguished,

1. *By their doctrine.* They preach the truths which he and his apostles preached. They "declare the counsel of God" revealed in the Bible. They bring to view, explain and inculcate the doctrines and precepts, which are brought to view, explained and inculcated in the Holy Scriptures. An aged and venerable man of God was once heard to say, "I love Christ's ministers: I love to have them come under my roof: and because they bring *Christ's doctrine* with them." And an apostle has said, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed: for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds." The doctrine here spoken of, is evidently that taught by Christ himself, and by his apostle; and particularly that system of truths, which relate to his person and character, and the way of salvation by him. Those teachers who do not embrace and inculcate this doctrine are called "deceivers;" and it is shewn to be doing evil to give any countenance to them. The ministers of Christ, then, who are not deceivers, and whom it is right to countenance, encourage and help, embrace and teach his doctrine. By this fruit, in part, they are to be known as his ministers. For these, surely, who do not preach the truths, which constitute his Gospel, cannot with any propriety be called his ministers. If they profess to be his, their profession is false.

The apostle just quoted says again, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know we the Spirit of God; every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." The apostle here enjoins a careful examination of the characters of religious teachers. He lays down a general rule, by which false teachers and the true ministers of Christ may be distinguished. Those who "confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" are of God. Those teachers who make such a confession understandingly and truly, must possess and communicate correct sentiments in regard to Christ's person, character and offices,—his atonement,—man's need of salvation by him,—and the whole plan of salvation; they must, in short, believe and preach the Gospel. The apostle says, "He that knoweth God heareth us." This shews that the true ministers

of Christ will believe and teach the doctrine of the apostles, who were commissioned to make known his truth and will to mankind.

The false teachers spoken of in several of the Epistles, are all represented as inculcating errors, and opposing the truth. Some of them are expressly represented as "denying the Lord that bought them;" by which we are doubtless to understand, that they denied his divinity, atonement, and mediatory work; in other words, they denied the doctrines which relate to his character, and the plan of salvation by him. Consequently, his true ministers acknowledge and preach these doctrines, and oppose the contrary errors.

Their preaching is in its *tendency* and *effects* similar to that of Christ and his apostles. If they preach the same truths, and inculcate the same duties, that Christ and his apostles did, the tendency of their preaching must be similar; and it must be expected that similar effects will result. The preaching of Christ and his apostles had a holy tendency. It was calculated to promote true righteousness. And it was actually the means of promoting the sanctification of the friends of God, and of leading sinners to repentance and obedience. It enlightened the consciences, even of many who were not brought to a right state of heart. It convinced men of sin. The tendency of the preaching of Christ's true ministers must be to enlighten the consciences of their hearers, to convince men of sin, to lead them to repentance, and to promote the sanctification and comfort of Christians. And we must suppose that these effects are in fact produced by means of their preaching.

2. The true ministers of Christ may perhaps be distinguished, not only by their doctrine, but *by their manner of preaching*. Ministers may preach substantially Christ's doctrine; and yet fail to exhibit the spirit of Christ in the delivery of their message. Christ and his apostles discovered in their very manner of preaching a holy and benevolent temper of heart. And many of Christ's ministers have shewn to their fellow men, that they were his true and faithful ambassadors, not only by declaring the truths of his Gospel, but by exhibiting in their preaching that meekness and humility, that love to divine truth and the Redeemer's cause,—that deep concern for God's glory, and the salvation of men, which characterize his followers. By such a manifestation of the truth, they have "commended themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." On the other hand, there have doubtless been instances, in which preachers have exhibited a spirit quite contrary to that of Christ, even in preaching the truth. In many instances, probably, they have at least failed to manifest the Christian temper in their preaching, though their doctrine might be according to the word of God. In a multitude of cases, indeed, it might be impossible to decide by this rule, who are Christ's true ministers, and who are not. Men may *appear* to have feelings which they do not possess; and holy feeling may exist in those who do not decidedly and satisfactorily manifest it in their public performances. But after hearing the preaching of such men as Baxter, Brainerd, Edwards, and Davies, who could entertain a doubt as to their being true ministers of Christ?

3. Christ's true ministers are to be known *by their habitual con-*

duct. The habitual conduct discovers, in a great degree, the motives of men, and shews their real characters. The false teachers referred to by Peter and Jude, not only "brought in damnable heresies," but were evidently the slaves of covetousness, pride, and sensuality. And Paul refers the Thessalonians to the holy and unblameable conduct of himself and his fellow labourers, as exhibiting proof of their being true ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Ye are witnesses, and God also," he says, "how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you." He tells the Corinthians that he and his associates approved themselves as the ministers of God, "in much patience, by pureness, by long suffering, by kindness, by love unfeigned, by the armour of righteousness." Those who possess holiness of heart will be upright, benevolent, and humble in their habitual conduct. They will follow Christ's example in their life. His ministers are imitators of him. They shun vicious practices. They are not devoted to the purposes of ambition and worldly gain. They maintain purity of conversation and behaviour. They are meek and lowly,—submissive to the divine will,—devoted to doing good, and glorifying God, as Christ was. They walk in some good degree as he walked. And their holiness of life gives evidence, that they are sincere in his cause. Their habitual and self-denying exertions to promote human well-being, afford proof to others that they are his ministers.

They are known by their doctrine, their manner of preaching, and their habitual conduct. These are the fruits by which they are to be distinguished. The ministers of Satan may indeed "be transformed as the ministers of righteousness;" yet in general the enlightened Christian may, by careful inspection, distinguish the latter from the former, through the medium of these fruits.

The subject is of great practical importance to both ministers and people. But I must conclude with remarking, that it is a solemn consideration, that Christ has declared, apparently with special reference to religious teachers, "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." Tremendous must be the doom of unfaithful, ungodly ministers, as well as of all other men, who do not "bring forth the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God." Y.

FOR THE EVANGELIST.

SELF DEFENCE.

According to a law which God gave his people Israel, a near kinsman of a murdered person, was not only allowed, but was actually required to become an avenger of blood. His requirement of this was explicit and peremptory. "Moreover, ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer—he shall surely be put to death." "The avenger of blood shall slay the murderer; when he meeteth him, he shall slay him." But if it is necessary that murder should

be avenged, is it not equally so, that it should be prevented ? And why is it not reasonable to suppose, that a man may be justified in going as far, and resorting to as strong measures, to prevent a murderer from taking life, as he would be to punish a murderer for having taken it ? What would be thought of an Israelite, who, in obedience to divine command, would kill a man to avenge the blood of a murdered brother, but who at the same time would make no resistance in defence of his own life ? Would not every one think of him, as David did of Abner, who suffered Joab to kill him ? " *Died Abner as a fool dieth.*"

Will it be said, that men are not required now, as in former times, to avenge the blood of a murdered brother ? I answer ; individuals are not ; but communities are. And the reason why individuals are not, is because it is now intrusted to the hands of public justice. No necessity therefore exists, why individuals should now become avengers. And this is doubtless the reason, why they are not now required to do it. But, in the case of a private assault, public justice affords no relief. The individual assaulted must defend himself or die. If he suffer himself to be slain, while the laws of God require, that the murderer also be put to death, what would be gained ? Here would be two lives destroyed, where in fact there was need of destroying but one. Nothing, therefore, would be gained, even in favour of the murderer himself. But can it be supposed, that God would require a man to become the avenger of a brother's blood, by slaying the murderer, when, at the same time, he would not allow this man to defend his own life from the attack of the murderer ? Such an idea, it is believed, few would be willing to adopt.

A thief, who breaks open a house to steal, in the night, may be smitten. According to the law of our land, and according to the law of God, if a man have his house broken open by a thief in the night, he may smite him. The law of God on this subject, is found in Exod. xxii. 2. in these words : " If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him."

But if God authorizes the act of smiting a thief, who breaks up a house in the night, even unto death, will any one doubt, whether men have a right to defend their own lives, when assaulted ? This is a law of God, which is perpetual. I say it is perpetual, because the circumstances, which first required it, still exist ; while no evidence can be produced, that it has ever been repealed. The circumstances, which originally required it, were, that wicked men are liable to break open houses in the night, and steal ; and when they are thus engaged, it is supposed they will perpetrate murder, rather than suffer themselves to be detected. Here it should be carefully noticed, that it is not merely for the crime of stealing, that God has authorized smiting them ; but it is for stealing in such circumstances, as endanger life.

And the same circumstances still exist. Wicked men are still liable to break open houses in the night to steal, and if they are interrupted, and likely to be detected, they are still liable to commit murder. And so long as these circumstances continue, it will be

agreeable to the laws of God, for those whose lives are thus endangered, to smite them even unto death, no blood shall be shed for them.

I will mention one case more. A sore battle was fought between the men of Israel and the men of Judah. Abner commanded the men of Israel, and was beaten before the servants of David. And there were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel. And Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe. And Asahel pursued after Abner ; and in going, he turned not to the right hand nor to the left, from following Abner. Then Abner looked behind him and said, art thou Asahel ? And he answered, I am. And Abner said to him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand, or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take his armour. But Asahel would not turn aside from following him. And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me ; wherefore should I smite thee to the ground ? Howbeit he refused to turn aside ; wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him under the fifth rib, and he fell down there, and died in the same place. Here we have an instance of self defence, which required the life of the assailant. Abner was under the necessity of killing Asahel, or of being killed himself. He was very unwilling to resort to the measure. He fled, but could not escape by flight. He then expostulated, and warned his enemy of his danger. Repeatedly he adjudged him to turn aside ; but he would not. He finally, as the only means of saving his own life, thrust him through with a spear.

On this it is obvious to remark, that Abner was either guilty of murder, or he was innocent. If he was guilty, Joab, who was brother to Asahel, had a right, according to the law of God, to be the avenger of his brother's blood. Joab actually became an avenger, and slew Abner. Now, was Joab's conduct right ? If Abner was guilty, Joab was certainly justifiable by an express law of God. If, then, it can be proved, that Joab was actually guilty of murder, in killing Abner, the conclusion will be irresistible, that Abner was justifiable in killing Asahel. But this can be proved. Joab was a murderer in this transaction. And holy David in his dying counsel to his son Solomon, charged him not to let the hoar head of Joab come to the grave in peace. Accordingly, Solomon ordered his death, that he might put away innocent blood from his house, and the house of his father ; and declared on the occasion, concerning Joab, and in reference to his murder of Abner, The Lord shall return his blood upon his own head.

SIMON.

FOR THE EVANGELIST.

MR. EDITOR,

I beg leave to offer a few thoughts on the subject of the "original apostacy of man," occasioned by the perusal of the remarks of your respected correspondent "F. S." It is conceived that those remarks generally must be approved by every spiritual mind. Some

of them, however, have served to confirm an opinion, long since imbibed ; that there is much appertaining to this subject, which must be referred to the "secret things" which "belong to God."

I have particularly noticed those observations which were intended to "show us what the apostle meant, when he stated, that *by the disobedience of one, many were made sinners.*" I think, with your correspondent, that the supposition, "that mankind are now *actually* guilty of the *act*, which Adam committed in eating the forbidden fruit," is inadmissible ; for, it is manifestly false, that a person should be *actually* guilty of an act, which was committed *prior to his existence*. But is this the import of the doctrine of imputation ? Does not the latter rather signify, reckoning to the account of one, that which was *not originally and actually his own* ? The Son of God was holy, undefiled, &c., yet, "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all." The inspired apostle assures us, that "by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." That there is a difficulty attending this subject, must be admitted ; but is it not a plainly revealed fact, that Adam was, in some manner, a representative of the whole human family ; and that in some manner, his offence was imputed, or placed to the account of all men ?

"F. S." supposes that "Adam, by becoming a sinner himself, put himself in a situation, in which his posterity are *necessarily* a sinful posterity." But is this more *reasonable* than the doctrine of imputation ? Is it *unreasonable*, that a *single sin* of Adam should, on any account, be reckoned to his Son ; and is it *reasonable*, that his *entire depraved nature and disposition* should be imparted to him, so that he *necessarily becomes sinful* ? I am not now considering whether this view of the subject is Scripture or not, but the question is, whether it is attended with any less difficulty than the doctrine of imputation ? Is it any more reconcileable with the idea of sin being *entirely a personal thing, a voluntary act, &c.* to suppose that we become *necessarily sinful*, by the efficient agency of another being ; i. e. of our father, who begat us in his own *moral* as well as natural likeness ? Is it any more "unreasonable," that we should be condemned for the sin of another, imputed to us, than that we should be condemned for the depraved nature of another *imparted to us* ? Will it be said, that this nature is only the *cause* of those volitions and actions, on which guilt is predicated ? But if it does not *itself* subject us to condemnation, how can it be *sinful* ? Can we indeed make a distinction between a man's sinful moral nature, and his sinful moral taste or disposition ? Is not this the source, the heart, whence proceeds all evil, and which exposes us to the wrath of God ? And is it not this, which he immediately requires should be changed into a holy nature ?

If, however, it were otherwise, and if we suppose that sinners are not blameable for that carnal nature, which they are supposed to receive by generation, but *only for the fruits of it* ; yet, if we suppose that, in consequence of this descent from a corrupt source, they are *necessarily sinful*, does it not still leave the difficulty in full force ? To suppose that we are guilty for dispositions or actions, *necessarily flowing from principles or nature*, which we originally possess, independently of our own voluntary exercises, is as irreconcileable with

our ideas of sin being wholly a personal and voluntary thing, as the doctrine of imputation.

Your correspondent supposes, that "if Adam had obeyed the Law respecting the fruit tree in the midst of Eden, he would have become, not only immortal, but he would also, have been confirmed in a state of permanent holiness." But how do we know this? Did the Almighty assure him of this? This I think does not appear in the Bible. "The virtual promise," does not necessarily imply anything more than a conditional promise of life, during that particular test of his obedience. But I cannot perceive any thing in revelation or reason, to forbid the supposition, that Adam, had he stood that test of his obedience for a time, might have received from his Creator some other trial of his obedience, when his capacities and obligations had increased.

I cannot perceive any security for the permanent holiness and felicity of any created, and consequently *mutable* being in the universe, except in the purpose and promise of God. And as we do not find any such promise made to Adam on condition of his not eating the forbidden fruit, for a certain period, I see nothing to justify such a supposition. Did we not know, that the holy Angels are "*elect*," we could not determine that there would be no future rebellion among them. And it is the gracious and transporting promise of God alone, which prevents a similar dreadful apprehension, respecting the spirits of just men made perfect. There is indeed a necessary connexion between holiness and felicity. But there is no necessary connexion between the *present* and *future* holiness of any created being, but what arises from the purpose of God; which purpose can be known to us no farther than it is revealed in his word. How glorious is that Gospel, which to our dark world of woe, hath brought life and immortality!

Z. Z.

ORDINATION SERMON.

2 Timothy, iv. 3.

For the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine.

Timothy was pastor of the church at Ephesus, in Asia Minor. Paul was his spiritual father, and had assisted in ordaining him to the episcopal office. It was natural, therefore, for Paul to feel a warm affection for Timothy, and to take a deep interest in his welfare as a christian, and his usefulness as a minister. Hence he wrote him his epistles on the various duties, trials, and encouragements of the ministerial office. In these epistles, he teaches Timothy, and through him, all succeeding ministers of Christ, how to preach and exhort, and how to live and conduct, on all occasions, under all circumstances, and towards all sorts of persons. In the verses preceding our text, the Apostle delivers a solemn charge to Timothy, respecting preaching:

"I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine." In our text, he assigns the reason for exhorting him to preach with *all long suffering*: "For the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine."

At the time this epistle was written, the congregations that attended on the preaching of the gospel, consisted, principally, of professors of religion, and of such professors as generally gave evidence of piety. Such, we may presume, was the congregation of Timothy at Ephesus. It seems to be implied in the Apostle's words, that they were then, both able and willing to bear a faithful and full exhibition of the doctrine of Christ. It is not intimated that they complained, either of Timothy's sermons, or of Paul's epistle to them. But the apostle, who had been the instrument of their conversion, and had spent no less than three years with them, probably apprehended, that some of them were not so sound in the faith as they appeared to be, and might in time, turn away their ears from hearing the truth: and besides, he foresaw, that the Ephesian congregation would soon, according to the course of nature be changed, and that Timothy, by and by, would have quite a different kind of hearers; some of whom would sit uneasy under his plain and powerful preaching. "For the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine."

Now, that which Paul foresaw would happen in Timothy's congregation, may happen in that of any other minister who preaches the same doctrine, in the same way. It is true, as a general observation, that *there is a time when some people will not endure sound doctrine*.

Here, then, let us inquire,

I. *What sound doctrine is?*

II. *Who those are, that will not at all times endure it?*

III. *When they will not endure such doctrine? And,*

IV. *Why they will not?*

We are to inquire,

I. *What sound doctrine is?*

The word *sound*, in its original and proper sense, is applicable to material substances only; and means solid, in opposition to hollow; whole, in opposition to defective; and healthy, in opposition to diseased. But the word is applied, figuratively, to a variety of things, both material and immaterial. We speak of a *sound body*, and a *sound mind*; of a *sound oak*, and a *sound argument*. In his epistles, Paul frequently applies this epithet to doctrine preached. By *sound doctrine*, he obviously means, that which is not false, or useless, or of a corrupting tendency. *Sound doctrine* is *true*, in opposition to the sentiments of false teachers and heretics. *Sound doctrine* is *profitable* in opposition to that which is trifling and frivolous, such as the Apostle calls foolish and unlearned questions, genealogies and old wives' fables. *Sound doctrine* is *of a good moral tendency*; as, indeed, all true doctrine must be; for "The truth is ever after godliness."

The doctrine which Christ preached, is *sound doctrine*. Our Lord was what Nicodemus acknowledged him to be, "a teacher sent from God." One design, though by no means the principal one, with which

he came into the world, was, "to bear witness to the truth." This design he fulfilled, by teaching the being and character of God, the mode of the Divine existence, the spirituality and perpetual obligation of the Divine law, the total depravity of mankind by nature, the necessity of the new birth, his own divinity and atonement, the election of grace, justification through faith, the perseverance of the saints, and the endless duration of future rewards and punishments. As Jesus Christ is "the faithful witness," we must admit, that these, and all the other doctrines of his gospel, which he preached himself, are sound.

We must also consider that as sound doctrine, which was taught by the inspired Apostles. As they received their commission from Christ, so they learned of him, and spake and wrote under the guidance and suggestion of his spirit. Whatever, therefore, is found in their epistles, is to be viewed as equally sound with the doctrines which Christ taught with his own mouth.

In a word, all that is taught in the sacred scriptures, whether directly and expressly, or implicitly and by fair and just inference, is to be received as sound doctrine: for "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine."

We are to inquire,

II. Who those are, who will not, at all times, endure sound doctrine.

The Apostle knew there were, or would be, such in Ephesus. There have been such not only in that favoured city, but also in every city and every place, in which the same doctrine has been exhibited, which Timothy preached and Paul wrote to the Ephesians. Who are they? Not true believers and real christians, surely. These have all received the love of the truth, that they may be saved. They possess that true charity which "rejoiceth in the truth." Just so far as they understand sound doctrine, they constantly embrace it. And so far as they do not understand it, they are willing to wait for further light. Christians are of a meek and quiet spirit, and are not hasty to reject and condemn a doctrine, because it is new to them, or above their present comprehension. While they think for themselves, and call no man master, they are sensible of their weakness and ignorance, and desire to be instructed: and hence they hear with attention and candour, and 'search the scriptures with diligence, to see whether things are so.' Sensible of the native blindness of their hearts, they pray for the sanctifying and illuminating influence of the Holy Spirit, that they may be led into all needful truth, although it should subvert their pre-conceived opinions and condemn their former practice. Such persons are always fed with the sincere milk of the word, and grow thereby in knowledge and grace. It is morally impossible that they should be unwilling to endure sound doctrine.

Those, then, who, at times, will not endure sound doctrine, are impenitent sinners and unbelievers. There is no middle class between saints and sinners, believers and unbelievers, christians and infidels. They are the impenitent and unrenewed only, who refuse to hear sound doctrine. But these are not always unwilling to endure sound doctrine. They sometimes choose to have such doctrine

preached, and hear it with a kind of pleasure and satisfaction. Which renders it necessary to inquire,

II. When is it, that impenitent sinners and unrenewed men will not endure sound doctrine ? I answer,

1. It is not, when they are entirely ignorant of such doctrine. When men, however depraved in heart, are ignorant of the truth, they are incapable of either approving or disapproving, of either receiving or rejecting it. In this state are those, who inhabit the dark places of the earth, and those in christian lands, who never read or heard sound doctrine. And in the same state of profound ignorance many remain, from year to year, who hear the truth constantly and clearly preached, but hear as though they heard not, with listless inattention and heedless indifference.

2. It is not when they are entirely stupid, that impenitent sinners will not endure sound doctrine. In this state mankind commence their moral existence. "Man is born as the wild ass's colt." And in this state of spiritual stupidity most unrenewed men remain, even under the clear light of the gospel. Their hearts are surfeited with worldly cares and sensual indulgence. They are neither allured by the invitations of Christ, nor alarmed by the terrors of the Lord. As they are not sensible of their depravity and guilt, so they do not feel their need of sanctification and pardon. Hence they regard the truths of the gospel as matters of mere speculation, in which they have no personal concern. If the voice and style and manner of the preacher be pleasant, they care not whether his doctrine be true or false. In this they feel too little interest either to love or hate, receive or reject. Like Gallio, they care for none of these things.

3. When under deep conviction, sinners are seldom unwilling to endure sound doctrine. Though it pricks them to the heart, yet they generally choose to hear it. Conviction is a knowledge and belief of the truth, accompanied with a feeling sense of one's personal concern in it. When under genuine conviction, sinners perceive that the doctrines of the gospel, which they believe and hate, are the only possible means of their own salvation, and that they must cordially embrace them or perish forever. Hence they feel afraid to have these doctrines concealed. However wounding to their selfish hearts, they choose to have the whole truth preached, and will take great pains to hear it. The instances are rare, in which sinners under pungent conviction, are impelled by their enmity, to shun the light of truth, at the risk of their souls.

4. Is it not when under a certain kind of self-deception, that sinners will not endure sound doctrine ? Of all rejectors and opposers of sound doctrine, self-deceivers and self-righteous hypocrites are the most bitter and violent, when, through the influence of error and delusion, they but partly believe it, and only fear that it may be true. Such were the ancient Scribes and Pharisees ; and such are many confident and ostentatious professors, at the present day.

But, self-deceivers do not all disbelieve the truth. Some of them have been instructed, and have learned doctrine. They see the truth, consistency and reasonableness of the doctrines of the gospel. They perceive a kind of natural beauty in the system of Divine

truth, arising from its proportion, harmony and sublimity ; and hence feel a kind of admiration of it, which they mistake for love, and which leads them to the pleasing conclusion, that they have been sanctified through the truth. Hence they become great sticklers for orthodoxy, while they hold the truth in unrighteousness. But,

5. When impenitent sinners have some knowledge of sound doctrine, are in some measure awakened to attend to it, and see its bearing upon themselves ; and yet are neither very thoroughly convinced of its truth, nor under such a strong delusion, as to imagine themselves its friends ; then it is, that they will not endure it.

It now remains to inquire,

IV. Why impenitent sinners in this situation, will not endure sound doctrine ?

The reasons are various ; but may all, perhaps, be reduced to the three following heads.—

1. Impenitent sinners, in the situation described, will not endure sound doctrine, because it *condemns* them. Such doctrine, when viewed in a true light, condemns all their erroneous opinions, all their selfish feelings, and all their sinful conduct. Hence,

2. It *mortifies* them. Sound doctrine sets the character of sinners in an odious light. It represents them as ignorant and erroneous, through the blindness of their heart, as void of holiness and full of evil, vile affections, and as bringing forth, from the evil treasure of their heart, nothing but evil things. This is more than their proud spirits can brook. They cannot bear to be thus exhibited to public view, as ungodly, selfish creatures, hateful and hating one another, wearing the moral image of the Devil. "So saying thou reproachest us also."

3. Sound doctrine *alarms* them. If they admit the truth of it, they must admit, that God abhors all their moral exercises and actions, and that He is angry with them every day. They perceive, that if they yield to sound doctrine, they can have no hope in the mercy of God, without the exercise of such repentance and faith as flow from holy, disinterested love, to which, of all things, they are most averse ; and, that, while able, but indisposed to do their duty, they are in the hand of God, as the clay in the hand of the potter, where, of all places, they are the most loth to be. But in this condition they must view themselves, unless they can either return to total stupidity again, or can get rid of the hated doctrine. Hence they cavil with it, object against it, and summon all the powers of sophistry to refute and explode it. And, if all other means fail, they exert their influence to silence or banish the preacher.

I shall now endeavour to apply the subject, agreeable to the present interesting occasion.

1. We may infer from what has been said, that it is impossible to determine, whether a doctrine be sound or unsound, from the manner in which it is received by those who hear it. In order to determine, in this way, whether a doctrine be sound or not, it would be necessary to know, precisely, the character and state of the hearers : for hearers of different characters, and hearers of the same character, in different states of mind, may give a very different reception

to the same doctrine, whether it be true or false. If a doctrine be sound, and be made clearly to appear so, it will be cordially received by intelligent saints ; and it may be received by sinners without opposition, if they are either stupid, or under deep conviction, or are deceiving themselves with the imagination that they love the truth, while they are only rationally convinced of it.

And, on the other hand, a doctrine that is unsound, and plainly appears so, while it is rejected by saints, may be either rejected or received, by sinners, according to the state of their minds, as to knowledge, awakening and conviction. We must know whether the hearers be saints or sinners, and, if sinners, whether they are stupid or awakened, convinced or unconvinced, self-deceived, or self-known, before we can determine the soundness or unsoundness of a doctrine, by the reception with which it meets. But who, except the Searcher of hearts, can know this ? An unsound doctrine may be very popular, and a sound one may be very offensive. The only standard of doctrine, is the word of God. "To the law and to the testimony : if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

Let all take heed *how* and *what* they hear, and search the scriptures daily, to see whether things are so. The leaven of error is continually at work. 'Many false prophets have gone out into the world' corrupting and perverting the word of God ; and many 'follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom, the way of truth is evil spoken of.'

2. It may be inferred from what has been said, that the manner in which a doctrine is received, is no rule to determine whether it is profitable or unprofitable, or whether it ought or ought not to be preached. The reception given to any doctrine, true or false, may, at the same time, be very different, in different places, and at different times, in the same place, according as the people happen to be saints or sinners, ignorant or enlightened, in a state of stupidity, or under powerful conviction. If, therefore, we were to determine the utility of a doctrine by its popularity, we should be led to the conclusion, at one time, that it is unprofitable to preach the truth, and at another time, that it is profitable to preach falsehood, and at all times, that true and false doctrine may be equally profitable.

If we would determine on rational and scriptural ground, whether a doctrine be profitable or unprofitable, suitable or unsuitable to be preached, the single point to be ascertained, is this : *Is it sound ?* The gospel is all a doctrine according to godliness ; and every truth comprised in this divine system, may be profitably preached in its proper place and due proportion ; and no preacher in any place, needs shun to declare to any people, all the counsel of God.

3. It is as foolish as it is wicked, for a minister to make it his main object in preaching, to please his hearers. For this is an object, which he can never be sure of obtaining, whether he preaches truth or falsehood. If he preaches truth, the time may come, when a majority of his people will not endure sound doctrine. If he preaches falsehood, though he may please his people, so long as they remain stupid, yet, as soon as they shall be awakened to serious con-

cern and anxious inquiry, they will loathe his antichristian philosophy, and vain deceit. Those whose end is popularity, seldom attain it, and more seldom preserve it. The old adage holds true in preaching, as well as in every thing else: that honesty is the best policy. He who uniformly preaches sound doctrine, and conscientiously holds fast the form of sound words, may be sure of the constant approbation of the friends of truth; will commend himself to the conscience of every attentive enlightened hearer, in the sight of God; and, if the Holy Spirit shall please to give his opposers repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth, they will thank him for his faithfulness, how much soever, in time past, it may have wounded and offended them.

4. We may learn from this subject, why a real revival of religion always renders a people willing to endure sound doctrine. Wherever there is such a revival, sinners are changed into saints; and saints love the truth, and 'desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby.' And as, during the progress of a real revival of religion, the number of those who love the truth, increases, so their relish for the truth increases just in proportion to their growth in knowledge and grace. Besides even those, who are only brought under deep conviction, in a revival of God's work, will generally cease to make open opposition to sound doctrine, and will patiently endure it, however painful it may be to their selfish hearts, and destructive to their groundless hopes.

And on the other hand,

5. Our subject teaches us, why a spurious reformation always leaves a people more hostile to the truth, than it found them. There may be a spurious or counterfeit reformation, as well as a real and genuine revival of religion. It is not an uncommon occurrence, for a stir and commotion to be excited among a people, by the noisy and passionate effusions of illiterate fanatics and designing impostors. No doubt, Satan himself, who knows how to transform himself into the appearance of an angel of light, may work upon the imaginations and passions of a people, and thus produce the show of a reformation in order to discredit the work of the Holy Spirit, and fill the minds of men with prejudice against religion.

But such a false reformation always leaves a people more at enmity with sound doctrine and less willing to hear it preached, than they were before. The fact is notorious. Our subject accounts for it. Such a reformation rouses sinners, in some degree, from their stupidity, without either enlightening their minds, or purifying their hearts. This just fits them to hate and resist the truth, whenever they hear it. Besides, in such a counterfeit revival, which is commonly more rapid in its progress than a real one, converts are made with great facility, and many impenitent sinners get a hope that they have passed from death unto life. The light of truth, when it comes to shine upon them, shows their hope to be false and delusive. But their hope is too precious to be given up. Hence they hate the light, and consider and treat those as their enemies, who faithfully and kindly tell them the truth. Hence,

6. We infer the propriety and importance of preaching the pecul-

iar and fundamental doctrines of the gospel, in the time of a revival of religion. It is proper and expedient, because, at such a time, more than at any other, both saints and sinners are willing to hear sound doctrine. Saints are ever the best pleased with plain and discriminating preaching, when they are in the most lively and constant exercise of holy and gracious affections. And if ever impenitent sinners will endure the searching and humbling truths of the gospel, it is when awakened from stupidity, convinced of sin, and anxiously inquiring what they shall do to be saved. It is, therefore, never more proper, because it is never more safe and acceptable, to preach the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, than in a time of revival. And, certainly, it is never more important: for these doctrines are the very touchstone of godly sincerity, and the only true criterion of christian character.—Those, who love these doctrines, love the truth, and are in the way to heaven; while those who hate these doctrines, hate the light, and are in the broad way to destruction. If, then, we would ascertain, whether a revival be genuine or spurious, and whether the converts be true or false, the best way, and the only sure way to determine, is, *to preach sound doctrine*. A revival, that may be killed by the most plain and full exhibition of evangelical truth, consists in dead works, proceeding from a dead faith. The sooner such a revival is killed, the better: for its fruits are Antinomian converts, elated with spiritual pride, and, of all impenitent sinners, the most determined enemies of truth and holiness.

7. From the preceding discourse, we may learn when it is that sinners will be most inclined to go after false teachers. It is precisely at the time, when they are most unwilling to endure sound doctrine. It is when they are awakened in some measure; but neither thoroughly convinced, nor savingly converted. Then, to avoid “the keen vibrations of bright truth,” and the consequent stings of conscience and fears of coming wrath, they will often flock to hear all sorts of hereticks, fanatics and seducers, who preach corrupt doctrine, and proclaim peace to the wicked, to whom God says, *there is no peace*. Hence the apostle writes, “The time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

And hence,

8. We may learn, when a minister of the gospel is under the strongest temptation to keep back profitable doctrine and speak smooth things. It is not when his hearers are either too stupid to attend to the truth, or so thoroughly convinced, as to desire to hear it; but it is when, by the ordinary means of instruction and the common strivings of the spirit, their minds are so far enlightened and their consciences so far awakened, as to excite their enmity to sound doctrine, and render them unwilling longer to endure it. Then the preacher is placed in a trying situation. It, to please the people, he prophesy deceit, he is in danger of incurring the displeasure of his Master, and destroying the souls of men; but if he persist in declaring the whole truth, he is in danger of losing his popularity, and what is worse, of losing his hearers.

O. T.

From the Utica Christian Repository.

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY—BY BUNYANUS.

CHAPTER V.

Then the Interpreter took the pilgrims out into a field, which they saw a man carefully ploughing, and preparing it to cast in the seed. Then he bid the pilgrims ask the man why he did so ; and the man answered, that he carefully prepared his ground, and sowed his seed, because he believed that all things take place according to an immutable decree ; and that this decree establishes a firm connection between the means and the end ; and that if it was decreed that he should reap a harvest, it was equally decreed that he should plough his field, and sow his seed. He was therefore using the appointed means, in order to secure the desired end.

Then the Interpreter took them to an adjoining field, which was unilled, and growing up with weeds, while the owner was sitting idle, with his hands folded, and looking at his ground, to see what would take place. So the Interpreter bid the pilgrims ask him why he did so differently from his neighbour, and he answered, that he did not, like him, believe that events take place according to any fixed and established order ; and consequently, that he thought he should be just as likely to reap a harvest, if he did nothing to his field, as if he should cultivate it with ever so much diligence ; and not wishing to bestow his labour for nought he was taking his ease, and waiting to see what his ground would produce.

Then said Thoughtful, I think I understand the meaning of these things. But the men act contrarily to what is frequently represented as the natural effect of their belief. The belief that every thing takes place according to a fixed decree is often thought to be adapted to discourage men from using means, instead of being an encouragement.

In. That is often said, indeed ; but it must be said without much reflection. These men act in exact consistency with their belief. The first believes that all things take place in a regular order, which is established by an immutable decree. He believes that this decree establishes a firm connection between the means and the end. And this belief prompts him to use means in order to attain the end ; for he knows that if the means fail, the end will also fail. While the other man does not believe the doctrine of decrees at all. He does not believe that there is any established order of events. And consequently, he feels no inducement to use means ; for he thinks every event is matter of chance, and that he is as likely to attain the end in one way as in another, without means, as with them. It is certain, whatever may be pretended, that men never do use any means to attain an end, any farther than they suppose there is some established connection between the means and the end ; that is, they never use means any farther than they believe in the doctrine of decrees. Some, indeed, who wish to keep God out of their sight, call this a law of nature ; but that is only another name for the fixed decree of the Author

of nature. And here we see the self-contradiction of those who say, if it is decreed they shall be saved, they shall be, whether they use the means of salvation or not ; or if it is decreed they shall be lost, they shall be, let them do what they will. Either they do not believe the decrees, or they love sin and are determined to live in it. If they believed the means and the end were connected together by an immutable decree, and had a sincere desire to secure the salvation of their souls, they would be disposed to use the means of salvation with all diligence. They would expect that " whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Then he took them to another place, where a judge was seated upon his tribunal, and several prisoners were standing before him, who had been engaged in rebellion against their lawful government ; and on due trial had been convicted of their crimes, and were now about to receive their sentence. The judge spoke to them on the blessings of good government, and pointed out the enormity of their offence, in endeavouring to destroy it and introduce anarchy and confusion. He pointed out the wisdom and equity of the law, which doomed them to confinement for life in the public prison. He showed how reasonable it was that those who had endeavoured to sacrifice the interests of a whole community, to the gratification of their own wicked passions, should now have their own interests given up in order to secure those of the community. He pointed out, for the warning of others, the misery they had thus brought upon themselves ; and in a most feeling manner, pronounced upon them the sentence of the law. He then delivered them into the custody of the officers whose business it was to put the sentence in execution, charging them, at the same time, to inflict no more upon them than the law demanded. Then I saw, that all the spectators were deeply moved, and with one voice acknowledged the justice and humanity of the judge, and the propriety of the sentence which had been pronounced. And even the prisoners themselves had nothing to say against it, but acknowledged both his justice and goodness.

Then said the Interpreter to the pilgrims, Take notice of these things, and settle them deeply in your minds.

Pil. We do so. But what is the explanation ?

In. Did you notice the appearance of the judge ?

Pil. We did.

In. Did he appear hard, or cruel, or malignant ?

Pil. Not at all. He appeared compassionate and merciful, though strictly just.

In. Did he seem to have any regard for the good of the criminals whom he condemned ?

Pil. He did seem to have the tenderest regard for them, and was much moved when he pronounced the sentence.

In. If he had any regard for their good, why did he not acquit them ?

Pil. He said that the public good required their condemnation ; and it was right that their private interest should be given up in order to secure the interests of the community, which they had endeavoured to destroy.

In. Just so. The judge acted a perfectly disinterested part. He valued the happiness of the criminals according to its real worth ; but he valued the good of the community more, because it was worth more. And so he gave up a less good, to secure a greater good, which was doing right. And the criminals themselves felt constrained to acknowledge both his justice and his goodness. This case then illustrates the conduct of our Lord the King, in the treatment of his incorrigible enemies. He does not pronounce the sentence of the law upon them, and doom them to perpetual confinement in his public prison, because he has any pleasure in their sufferings. He is full of compassion, and of great mercy. "He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked." He values their happiness according to its real worth ; but he values public good more than the happiness of those individuals, because it is worth more. And so, to secure the public good, he gives up the private good of those individuals, and dooms them to suffer the punishment which their crimes deserve. And when he shall do this, in the presence of the whole assembled universe, they will all be convinced that he is just and good, in so doing. Even his enemies will have nothing to say against it ; but every mouth will be stopped.

Then he took them to another place, where he showed them a vast crowd of people, of a most wretched appearance, clothed in rags, and starving with hunger. Near them stood a large storehouse, abundantly furnished with provisions and clothing for them all. And several servants of the owner of the storehouse were employed in going round among the miserable crowd, and inviting them to come to the storehouse and receive a supply for all their wants, "without money and without price." But the pilgrims beheld, that, when invited, they "all with one consent began to make excuse." So the servants returned and told their lord that they could not persuade any to come. Then their lord said, they deserve indeed to perish with hunger ; but yet, I will not have all this provision made, and fail in my benevolent purposes. Go again, and invite them. So the servants went again, and repeated their invitations, and added many entreaties ; but still without success, till at length their lord sent an invisible agent who had power over the heart, with directions to go to certain individuals of his selection, and make them "willing in the day of his power." So when he touched their hearts, they complied with the invitations addressed to them, and came to the storehouse, and received freely whatsoever they needed. But the rest still continued to refuse ; and some of them treated the servants who invited them very ill, and loaded them with every kind of obloquy and reproach.

Then said the Interpreter, have you considered these things ? Why do these miserable creatures perish with hunger ?

Th. There appears to be enough in the storehouse for them all, so that those who perish, do not perish for want of provision made for them.

In. No, they perish through their own fault. They will have no one to blame but themselves.

Th. But will not the provision be wasted ? Why was provision made for them all ? Did not their lord know that none would accept it but such as his invisible agent made willing ?

In. Yes ; their lord knew it. But the provision will not be wasted. Their lord does nothing in vain. And if it answered no other purpose, it was necessary that provision should be made sufficient for the whole, in order that all might be sincerely invited to come ; and that they might know that the offer was sincerely made, so that they might be fully convinced that they could blame no one but themselves. And besides, this provision is of a peculiar nature. As the brazen serpent lost none of its efficacy to cure the bitten Israelites after any number had looked upon it, so this provision suffers no diminution by the number of those who partake of it, but always continues in the same abundance, after thousands and millions have been supplied. Just as much was necessary to be made for those who are supplied ; and no more would have been necessary for the supply of all.

Th. But will not some of them complain of their lord for not making all willing when he had the power to do it ?

In. They may complain, for they are very unreasonable creatures ; and are seeking occasion to complain of their lord. But who will think they have any reason to complain, when they have their own choice, and might come if they would ? What reasonable man will ever complain of another for giving him that which he chooses for himself ?

Th. Please to explain this to us more fully.

In. Those miserable objects which you saw are rebels against their rightful lord and sovereign, and by their own wicked and foolish conduct have brought themselves into their present wretched state. They are starving with hunger, and clothed in rags ; and they must perish soon if they are not relieved. Their lord, as you see, in the greatness of his compassion, has made abundant provision for them all, and offers it to them freely, on the easy condition of their accepting it as a free gift to the ill deserving. But they will not accept it. They hate their lord, and choose rather to perish, than to be indebted to him for any favour. Such are the rebels against our Lord the King. Such were we all by nature, being "children of wrath even as others." The Prince Immanuel has, by his death, made abundant provision for the whole world. And in consequence of this provision, his servants are sent forth to invite all to come. All might come if they would. But so great is the perverseness of their hearts, that they will not come to him that they might have life. And now, he might justly leave them all to perish in their sin and folly. But he has graciously determined that they shall not all perish. He has determined to leave some of them to perish, for the glory of his justice, and to make others the monuments of his grace. And he sends forth the Holy Comforter to change their hearts and make them willing. As soon as he touches their hearts, by his invisible, but Almighty agency, they become willing, and freely and voluntarily accept the offered mercy, while the rest perish in their sins, and receive according to the just demerit of their crimes. But you see, that though there is abundant provision of food and clothing in the store house, it does no good to any till they come and receive it. They must come and accept it as a free gift. This is the condition which they must perform, or die. This shows the difference between the work of atonement, and the work of redemption.

The atonement consisted in making the provision. Redemption consists in making them partakers of that provision. The atonement is sufficient for all, but it is only applied to a part. The atonement has been styled a *cover for sin*. The garments laid up in the store house may be styled a cover for the nakedness of those wretched creatures ; but they do not actually become a cover of their nakedness, till they put them on.

Then he took them again to a prison, and looking into it, they saw a number of criminals who had been tried and found guilty of certain crimes. They were condemned already, and the wrath of their King abode upon them. And as they looked, they saw the King's officers come to the prison, with a free and full pardon for a part of them, and a warrant for the execution of the sentence upon the rest. So a part of them were set at liberty, and the rest were led away to suffer the sentence of the law.

Then said the pilgrims, what means this ?

In. You see here an illustration of the sovereignty of our Lord the King. As these men were all justly condemned for their crimes, so all his rebellious subjects are condemned already. But as the end of punishment, in every good government, is not the gratification of malignant feelings, but the promotion of the public good, and the sentence of the law is executed only where the public good requires it, and when the public good will admit of it mercy is exercised in the pardon of offenders ; so our Lord the King will promote the honour of his name, and the highest interests of his holy kingdom, by extending pardoning mercy to some, and executing the penalty of his law upon others, exactly as the public good requires. But, as you saw, that all these criminals were guilty and justly condemned, and their King, having determined to show mercy to a part of them, made his own selection of the objects of his mercy ; so our Lord the King chooses out of those who are in the like condemnation whom he will have the objects of his mercy, and whom he will make the monuments of his justice. Mercy is his own prerogative ; and he has a right to bestow it when and where he pleases. And this sovereignty of his is an amiable and benevolent sovereignty ; not being exercised capriciously, but according to the dictates of infinite wisdom and goodness.

Then said the Interpreter, I will show you a little more. So he took them to another place, and they saw a wounded man supported by several attendants, and the surgeons examining his wound. They saw also the man who had wounded him, in the hands of the officers of justice, who were about to lead him away to his trial. Then said the surgeons, we have examined the wound ; and we find, that the wounded man had, in his vital parts, a disease, which would soon have destroyed his life, had it not been opened. But this wound has opened the part, and will probably save his life. Then they followed the man who had inflicted the wound to the court of justice, and he was put upon his defence. He said he had indeed inflicted the wound with the intention of killing the other ; but since it appeared from the report of the surgeons that he had saved his life, he claimed not only an acquittal from the charge laid against him, but

the reward promised to such as saved the life of another. But the court decided, that he must be judged according to his intentions ; and since these were criminal, he must suffer the punishment which the law annexed to his offence.

Then said the pilgrims, what means this ?

In. This shows the folly of those who teach that *utility* constitutes *virtue*.—The man who wounded his fellow, had murder in his heart. By the hand of Providence, however, his weapon was so directed, that he saved the life that he intended to destroy. He really accomplished good, while he intended evil. But the court justly decided, that though he had not accomplished the evil he intended, he was still criminal, and must be punished accordingly. Judas, also, who betrayed his master, and those who condemned and crucified him, really accomplished good, while they intended evil. They accomplished the wise and benevolent purpose of our Lord the King, thus to provide an atonement for the sins of the world, for which we all have occasion to rejoice and give thanks to the King, and to the Prince Immanuel, who consented thus to die. But these wicked men intended evil and were justly condemned for it ; and some of them, at least, if not all, felt and acknowledged it, and condemned themselves. And so it is in all cases. While wicked men intend evil by what they do, our Lord and King intends and accomplishes good by it all. So that while we blame and condemn them for their wicked design in what they do, we have occasion to bless and praise our Lord the King for the good which he designs and thus accomplishes.

FROM THE CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

SUCCESS OF MISSIONS.

No. II.

Mission of the United Brethren.—This mission has been distinguished, not less by the purity and disinterested perseverance of its missionaries, than by the success, which has attended their efforts. In the fore part of the eighteenth century, the Moravian Brethren became ardently desirous to promote the salvation of their fellow men, by making known to them the gospel of Jesus Christ. ' When their number scarcely amounted to six hundred persons—when they had only just found rest from suffering themselves, from the unrelenting cruelty of the Romish church, and were beginning to build a church and habitations, where there had previously been a desert, the missionary spirit was sent down upon them, with such constraining influence, that within eight or nine years, they had sent Missionaries to Greenland, to the Indians in North and South America, to many of the West India islands, to Lapland, to Algiers, to Guinea, to the Cape of Good Hope, and to Ceylon.' Their means were very small, but " they went forth, in the strength of their God, and he has wrought wonders for them."

Their missions have increased to thirty settlements, in which, about one hundred and fifty missionaries are employed, who have under their care, about twenty-four thousand converts, from among various heathen tribes. Though small and feeble, when they began their missionary enterprise, they have put, and continued in operation, a system of measures, for the conversion of the heathen, more efficient, than almost all the attempts of the whole church, and world besides. Wilberforce describes them, as "a body of christians, who have, perhaps, excelled all mankind, in solid and unequivocal proofs of the love of Christ, and of the most ardent, and active, and patient zeal, in his service. It is a zeal, tempered with prudence, softened with meekness, soberly aiming at great ends, by the gradual operation of well adapted means, supported by a courage which no danger can intimidate, and a quiet constancy, which no hardships can exhaust." Their missionary efforts have been very extensive, and their success shews, that the rudest barbarians may be civilized, by being christianized. "Wherever the brethren," says Montgomery, "have preached the gospel among savages, they have introduced the arts of social life, and wherever the gospel has been received, those savages have become changed, not only in heart, and in conduct, but in personal appearance and intellect. Enlightened travellers, who have occasionally visited their remote settlements, have been struck with wonder, on beholding the comfortable habitations, the happy circumstances, the humble demeanor, and the fervent piety of the converts from paganism, whether Greenlanders, Esquimaux, North American Indians, Negroes, or Hottentots. And the governments of the colonies, where the missionaries have been stationed, have borne the most favourable testimony, to the benign influence of their labour upon the state of society, in the neighbourhood of their congregations."

The Moravian Brethren laboured for a considerable time without any apparent success, but the fruits of their zeal and perseverance in due time appeared. In the West Indies, there are now more than 20,000 negroes, joined to their congregations, and great numbers have entered into eternal rest, stedfast in the faith of Christ. These congregations are increasing and multiplying, beyond the capacity of the churches to contain, and of the missionaries to superintend them. Nor were their efforts less successful in Greenland. Nearly the whole of the Greenland population, in the neighbourhood of some of their settlements, has embraced the christian religion.—The state of society is wonderfully changed, and instruction, through the medium of Danish and Moravian teachers is as universal, as in any country. The Moravian Missionaries went also among the Indians of North America, and many thousands of these roving and turbulent savages were converted from the error of their ways, and adorned the doctrine of God their Saviour, both in their lives, and by their deaths. They went among the Hottentots, in the south of Africa, and though their first attempts were attended with some disasters, yet they persevered, meeting dangers with boldness, and enduring suffering with patience, until at length, they had the pleasure to see their settlements, like the "garden of the Lord, in the midst of

the wilderness,"—the Hottentots themselves, being as much changed in their habits, manners, and minds, as the face of the country has been improved by industry and skill. The love of Christ has subdued their natural character, and they have become tractable and mild in their dispositions.

These missionaries have had to contend with every thing, which is "stupid in ignorance, and wayward in depravity." But their perseverance and success have surpassed all rational expectation. What they have accomplished, with their scanty means, seems almost incredible. But the truth is attested, by the facts themselves. Let him, who thinks nothing has been accomplished by missionary efforts, consult the history of the Moravian brethren, and unless he has a "hardihood of incredulity, or a strange talent, at misunderstanding plain facts," he must be convinced, that such efforts, accompanied with such success, would soon evangelize the world. Yea, had the rest of the protestant world been equally active, and equally successful, the night of paganism would already have been past, and the sun of righteousness would have illumined and reformed, and blessed the whole family of man.

Before we close this number, we will notice one circumstance, which is inseparably connected with the success of these self-denying and devoted missionaries. The circumstance now alluded to, is the great change which took place in the mode adopted, in their endeavours to instruct the natives. The account is given as follows, by Montgomery. "The method pursued by them, for some time, consisted principally in speaking to the heathen, of the existence, attributes and perfections of God, and enforcing obedience to the divine law; hoping by this means, gradually to prepare their minds for the reception of the sublime and more mysterious truths of the gospel. For five years, the missionaries had laboured in this way, and could scarcely obtain a patient hearing, from the savages. Now, therefore, they determined, in the literal sense of the words, to preach *Christ and Him Crucified*. No sooner did they declare unto the Greenlanders, the "word of reconciliation," in its native simplicity, than they beheld its converting and saving power. This reached the hearts of their audience, and produced the most astonishing effects. An impression was made, which opened a way to their consciences, and illuminated their understandings. They remained no longer the stupid and brutish creatures they once had been; they felt they were sinners, and trembled at their danger; they rejoiced in the Saviour, and were rendered capable of sublimer pleasures, than those arising from plenty of seals, and the low gratification of sensual appetites. A sure foundation being thus laid, in the knowledge of a crucified Redeemer, the missionaries soon found that this supplied the young converts with a powerful motive to the abhorrence of sin, and the performance of every moral duty towards God and their neighbour; taught them to live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world; animated them with the glorious hope of life and immortality; and gave them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, as the Creator, Preserver and moral Governor of the world, in a manner far more correct and influential than they

could ever have obtained, had they persevered in their first mode of instruction. The missionaries themselves derived benefit from this new method of preaching.

The doctrines of the cross of Christ warmed and enlivened their own souls in so powerful a manner, that they could address the heathen with uncommon liberty and fervor, and were often astonished at each other's power of utterance. In short, the happiest results have attended this practice, not only at first and in Greenland, but in every other country where the Brethren have since laboured for the conversion of the heathen."

W.

From the Christian Watchman.

THE BACKSLIDER.

On my removal to——, I procured a recommendation which gave me easy access to the pastor of the church and the people of his charge. Upon intimate acquaintance I found them like other professors, some green, with neither blossoms nor fruit, some bearing the fruits of righteousness in diversified proportions, some producing fruit of a degenerate vine, and some apparently dead while they held a profession. They were also surrounded by observers similar to those which we find in the neighbourhood of every church. I found here, as in other places, cause to lament that the most disreputable professors were those who mixed with the unbelieving part of society without reserve. The enemies to experimental religion saw them at parties and places of publick amusement, heard their conversation, observed their conduct, and took from them their opinions of religious people. The most pious and circumspect were scarcely known.

Among these people was a gentleman upon whom age had made some impression. He filled his place on a Sabbath, with regular decency, and was punctual at the Lord's table; but I seldom saw him at private meetings. In reply to some inquiries, I was told, "he is a good man, but not very active. We have from him every thing but his publick prayers. We hope he prays for us in private." What, thought I, is it to be supposed, that a man who is seldom known to pray, really maintains intercourse with God at a throne of grace? This gentleman is not diffident in other departments. He gives his opinion freely and fluently upon business, news, the affairs of his neighbours, and upon politics; why should he be always silent upon that subject, which by its importance outweighs every other? I determined, if possible, to get acquainted with him, but found I was pursuing a wrong course, for he was very shy. I changed my measures. Having some secular arrangements to make, I consulted him and found him affable, and intelligent. We became friends; and when I had secured his confidence, I watched an opportunity to carry my point. One evening, when the conversation was private and entirely confidential, I slid in the subject by remarking, what a privilege it was, amidst the vicissitudes of life, to hold communion with that God who directs and

and arranges all events. He started at the hint, but as I was in his own parlour, he could not tell me to go, he could not withdraw, he could not sit silent, and, as a professor, he could not treat the remark with lightness. I drew him on with tenderness and caution. At last he confessed himself, with some hesitancy, *an unhappy man*. I urged him to give me a summary of his religious history, and the reason of his unhappiness, and at last was successful. He began as follows :

" I joined the church when I was 19 years of age. The next 12 months was a time of great enjoyment. The company of my brethren was refreshing to me, but in private I had peculiar delight. God was precious to me, my hopes were firm, I subdued temptation, the Saviour seemed near to me, and I walked in the fear of God and the comforts of the Holy Spirit. Being in business, I felt I wanted a companion. When 20, I became acquainted with the family of my late dear wife. They were moral, polite, intelligent, kind and facetious. They never opposed my religion, but would occasionally banter me for my scrupulosity ; would ask me how we passed our time at our prayer-meetings—and make some ludicrous remarks upon the inconsistencies or follies of some of my brethren. Their company became a snare to me, and I spent in it many hours which ought to have been passed elsewhere. I am satisfied from experience that the company of moral, amiable people, who are not the subjects of true religion, is more dangerous than that of the profane. I was married at 21, and took to my bosom one of the best and most amiable of wives, but at the same time entirely insensible of the necessity of the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. I had by this time lost my enjoyment in private, and much of my relish for the social and publick means. I commenced house-keeping with family prayer, but found much embarrassment in it. I loved my wife and found a difficulty in praying for her as an unbeliever before domestics. She would sometimes be absent when the time came, and when she attended, discovered the pensiveness of reluctance which used to wound me. She would artfully manage to entangle me in frequent engagements in company from whence we returned late, and prayer before we retired to bed would be omitted. Omission gradually became a habit, which habit she would affectionately excuse of a morning on account of my being hurried with business, and in the evening because I was exhausted with the 'oils of the day. Thus I passed my years, and never tasted happiness only when I could forget religion, and alas ! that was too often the case with me. My friends used to call me a happy, prosperous man ; and whenever I heard such remarks they wounded me ; the thought of past enjoyments which I could not recal, embittered my cup, and made me inwardly mourn. My brethren would occasionally urge me to attend their private meetings, but I could not. As I was punctual in my engagements, moral in my habits, and liberal in my contributions, they never seemed to suspect my dreadful situation. Thus I passed 28 years, when my dear wife was seized with a fever which was followed by delirium, and terminated in her death. I was almost distracted at this event. I was never before impressed with the profane bustle and indecent parade attendant upon our funerals. I wanted reflection and retirement on the sad occasion, but could not

have it. This parade being over, and my house once more my own ; I visited frequently the room where 30 years back I had enjoyed so much. I read the same passages of Scripture, the same books, endeavoured to recal the same thoughts, but it was all in vain. I fear I am abandoned. I have no comfort, no hope ; surely there is no mercy for me. Tell me, if you know, what I can do to recover the presence of God."

I pitied my friend and said to him, your case is that of a backslider. A backslider is at a distance from God. You have forsaken your first love. You must repent, and do your first works. Endeavour as a sinner to come to God through the merits and intercession of his Son Jesus Christ, and implore his forgiveness, and the restoration of the joys of his salvation, and you will not be rejected. He will heal your backsliding, and receive you graciously. My friend made the attempt, and has succeeded. He is now an ornament to religion, a comfort to his brethren, and a blessing to the neighbourhood where he resides.

Ye pious youth, the hope of our churches, take warning by my friend, and avoid the allurements of the gay, fascinating, amiable part of the world. You have a character to sustain, which can never be supported without communion with God.

AQUILA.

APHORISMS.

"Evil communications corrupt good manners."

As it is somewhat difficult to live in a place where the pestilence rages, and not be infected by it, so it requires more virtue than is common to human nature to associate with the vicious and profane without feeling the effect of it.

"Envy," says Johnson, "is, above all other vices, inconsistent with the character of a social being, because it sacrifices truth and kindness to every weak temptation. He that plunders a wealthy neighbour, gains as much as he takes away, and may improve his own condition in the same proportion as he impairs another's ; but he that blasts a flourishing reputation, must be content with a small dividend of additional fame, so small as can afford very little consolation to balance the guilt by which it is obtained."

TOWN CLERK OF EPHESUS.

"I have heard one say, (observes Dr. Mather,) that there was a gentleman, in the 19th chapter of Acts, to whom he was more indebted than to any man in the world. This was he whom our translation calls the Town Clerk of Ephesus, whose counsel it was to do nothing rashly. Upon any proposal of consequence, it was an usual speech with him—"We will first advise with the Town Clerk of Ephesus."

FROM THE RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER.

A FRAGMENT FOUND IN A SKELETON CASE.

Behold this ruin ! 'Twas a scull
 Once of ethereal spirit full !
 This narrow cell was Life's retreat :
 This space was Thought's mysterious seat !
 What beauteous pictures fill'd this spot,
 What dreams of pleasure, long forgot !
 Nor Love, nor Joy, nor Hope, nor Fear,
 Has left one trace of record here !

Beneath this mould'ring canopy
 Once shone the bright and busy eye—
 But start not at the dismal void !—
 If social love that eye employ'd,
 If with no lawless fire it gleam'd,
 But through the dew of kindness beam'd,
 That eye shall be forever bright,
 When stars and suns have lost their light !

Here, in this silent cavern, hung
 The ready, swift, and tuneful tongue :
 If Falsehood's honey it disdain'd,
 And where it could not praise, was chain'd ;
 If bold in Virtue's cause it spoke,
 Yet gentle Concord never broke ;
 That tuneful tongue shall plead for thee,
 When death unveils eternity !

Say, did these fingers delve the mine,
 Or with its envied rubies shine ?
 To hew the rock or wear the gem,
 Can nothing now avail to them :
 But if the page of Truth they sought,
 Or comfort to the mourner brought,
 These hands a richer meed shall claim
 Than all that waits on wealth or fame !

Avails it whether bare or shod
 These feet the path of duty trod ?
 If from the bowers of Joy they fled
 To soothe Affliction's humble bed :
 If Grandeur's guilty bribe they spurn'd,
 And home to Virtue's lap return'd ;
 These feet with angels' wings shall vie,
 And tread the palace of the sky !

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Those gentlemen who intend to favour us with communications for the Evangelist, are requested to forward their pieces as soon as is convenient.